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**KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

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# PRESS RELEASE

## Food risk assessment – guarantee of state's food safety

***The USAID Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Project is training government bodies in food risk assessment to ensure that only safe goods are supplied to the market.***

From August 11-15 the USAID Regional Trade Liberalization and Customs Project held a seminar on **food risk assessment** in Kashka-suu village. At the seminar, experts and public officers of the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, veterinary and toxicological inspectors, and scientific institutes studied how to assess food safety risks in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Seminar participants were introduced to the principles of risk assessment and taught how to decide which goods require a full inspection when presented for import at the border. They discussed why a country needs food safety standards and learned about international food safety standards, roles and liabilities under OIE, IPPC, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and Codex, risk assessment and risk management in food safety, HACCP approach to development of standards, and compliance with standards. The seminar was presented by the well-known practitioner and lecturer Dr. Richard L. Ellis who is a member of the Joint FAO/WHO expert committee on Food Additives (JECFA) and has more than 28 years of experience in the field of food safety.

Kyrgyzstan is a member of the WTO and seeks to increase exports by improving the access of its goods and services to foreign markets. The country also is interested in encouraging businesses to supply the domestic market with high quality safe goods. However, **its existing system for regulating the safety of foods and related production processes (in WTO terminology – technical regulations) is not in a full compliance with internationally accepted regulations and WTO requirements, and therefore is in deep need of reform.**

As a legacy of the Soviet period, Kyrgyzstan uses some 50,000 documents on technical regulations and descriptions of a product, processes of production, operation, storage, transportation, selling, works and services, including about 22,500 standards, 1000 SanPiNov, 1100 Construction. Many of these are obsolete and fail to comply with accepted international standards, which are generally required by WTO.

Such high number of applicable laws, directives, statutory acts of ministries and inspection committees hinder competition, as safety requirements are vague or do not comply with international standards. Despite international agreements and treaties on reciprocal acceptance of results of compliance assessment by other states, imported products are often required to undergo additional inspections, which creates unwarranted technical barriers in trade and provides other states with a justification to take similar measures against products from Kyrgyzstan.

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*This project is one of many projects funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is part of the assistance coming from the American people to Kyrgyz Republic since 1992.. The project aims to support economic development of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan through trade, transit, and customs reform. For more information on other USAID-funded projects in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia, please visit <http://centralasia.usaid.gov>.*